

## PSYCHOANALYSIS - EGO STATES DISCUSSION AND DEMONSTRATION

**Kain:** Karen, can you remember a discussion, a conversation that we've recently had where you were giving reference to sometimes avoiding confrontation, to sometimes not dealing with stuff in a certain way?

**Karen:** Yeah.

**Kain:** I'm just wondering if you could just refresh our memory, just so we can get back in that zone.

**Karen:** Sure. I remember the conversation, we were talking about my tendency during confrontation, or in that specific example it was a tension in a relationship where I felt like I'd been in the wrong and was being challenged on that. My tendency is to withdraw, to get upset, to emotionally overreact and not deal with the situation particularly maturely.

**Kain:** Okay, not deal with a situation particularly maturely.

**Karen:** No.

**Kain:** It seems to me that sometimes you have a tendency to resort back to some sort of earlier childlike state.

**Karen:** Yes, where it's easier to withdraw and just not deal with it.

**Kain:** Easier to withdraw, to hide, to avoid the situation, this is kind of like a defence mechanism or something, isn't it?

**Karen:** I'd say so, yeah.

**Kain:** I'd say so, oh my goodness. Well, can we have a look at it, shall we just explore it? Let's just see if there is in fact a particular role that you are attempting to fulfil, because what I reckon it would be fair to assume is that there's always going to be a motivation that underpins, that drives our behaviour, so if we can understand what the motivation is, then hopefully we're going to be able to in turn better understand the behaviour.

**Karen:** Okay.

**Kain:** Does that make sense?

**Karen:** Yeah.

**Kain:** So I'm just wondering if you could just picture yourself in a situation like that where you are fighting not fighting, where you're avoiding confrontation. Has there been a situation recently where you have...

**Karen:** Yeah, there's one I can bring to mind.

**Kain:** There's one you can bring to mind, okay, so just if you'd be willing to, just be as open and honest as what you can be, you don't have to give reference to any names or any specific certain people, just talk generally, but give us a little bit of context, what was happening for you in this situation.



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**Karen:** Sure. So what was happening was I was with another person and we were chatting, and I got distracted from the conversation.

**Kain:** You got distracted from the conversation.

**Karen:** Yeah, by something irrelevant that I was thinking about.

**Kain:** Can we just focus in on that just for a second? I'm just wondering at what point you became aware that you had been distracted?

**Karen:** When the other person challenged me on it, because I wasn't fully engaged in the conversation.

**Kain:** So you weren't fully engaged in the conversation.

**Karen:** No.

**Kain:** So just to hear you right, just to make sure that I'm actually hearing you right here, so you were in a conversation with someone, was it just you and one other person?

**Karen:** Yes.

**Kain:** So you and one other person were having a conversation. You lost focus, you drifted off somewhere else?

**Karen:** Yeah.

**Kain:** You drifted off somewhere else and then this other person became aware of this and confronted you about it.

**Karen:** Yeah.

**Kain:** Okay, well, that seems like a perfectly fair thing to do. Was that okay? Is it okay that this actually happened, was it fair, first and foremost?

**Karen:** It was fair, yeah.

**Kain:** So it was a fair confrontation.

**Karen:** It was fair, yeah.

**Kain:** Okay, cool, so what happened next?

**Karen:** So rather than just apologise and then move on with the conversation, I blew it out of proportion and said in mind and shut down and started telling myself stupid stories that I'd made a mistake here, the other person wasn't particularly happy about it, so I blew out of proportion their response as well.

**Kain:** Okay, so you magnified this other person's response.

**Karen:** Thinking that this was awful, I'd killed the day and it wasn't that bad.



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**Kain:** It wasn't that bad, okay. So the situation within itself wasn't that bad.

**Karen:** No.

**Kain:** So it would have been easy enough to resolve this issue that you...

**Karen:** It would have been easy enough to resolve it, yeah, maturely.

**Kain:** It would have been easy enough, so I take it that the situation wasn't resolved easy enough.

**Karen:** No, I made it far too difficult.

**Kain:** You made it far too difficult. Okay, so I've just picked up on one word, you said blew out of proportion, something was blown out of proportion. I'm just wondering if you could just focus in on this conversation now, perhaps even close your eyes if you could, and just see if you can picture inside of your mind's eye how it is that you're now relating to this other person.

**Karen:** Now that I've blown it out of proportion?

**Kain:** Yeah, just picture yourself in that scenario, in that environment, and just see if you can just replay that entire event through your mind, see what was going on, but more than anything else, not so much focusing on what was being said, but rather how it was that you were responding to this person. Was there a role that you were occupying here that may not have been the most appropriate role for you to occupy? Was this person a parent, for example? Was this person superior to you? Was it a boss or...

**Karen:** No, no.

**Kain:** No, so this person's not superior to you.

**Karen:** No, this person's equal.

**Kain:** So this person's equal to you. So I'm just wondering what role it was that you would have resorted back to that would have resulted in this entire situation being blown out of proportion.

**Karen:** I was resorting back to a child and withdrawing and shutting down.

**Kain:** So you withdrew and you shut down. What role was this other person playing? Were they playing a role? It would have been parent, controlling, manipulative parent, it would have been unconditionally accepting, loving, giving, caring parent, or it would have been adult or child.

**Karen:** Adult.

**Kain:** So this other person was conducting themselves in a relatively mature way.

**Karen:** Yeah.





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**Kain:** Did you or were you behaving as an equal in this relationship now?

**Karen:** No, I was putting myself below this other person.

**Kain:** You put yourself below.

**Karen:** And acting like a child.

**Kain:** And what happened next?

**Karen:** What happened next...the other person became increasingly frustrated that I was behaving in this way, and it did have a damper on the rest of the day.

**Kain:** So it was kind of as if your false evidence appearing real became real.

**Karen:** Yeah, yeah.

**Kain:** Alright, so you actually ended up getting what it was that you feared the most.

**Karen:** I did, yeah.

**Kain:** That's interesting. Alright. So are we able to see that there was a role that you occupied here that played a part in this confrontational problematic scenario?

**Karen:** Definitely, yeah.

**Kain:** So that's link number one, that's the first link that we want to make, and this is just about you taking ownership, that you did actually step into a certain role. So just to be clear here, this role that you stepped into wasn't one of equality.

**Karen:** No.

**Kain:** It definitely wasn't.

**Karen:** No.

**Kain:** Well, that makes sense, that's going to be a great way to really sever the connection with another person anyway, isn't it?

**Karen:** Yeah.

**Kain:** Okay, good. So tell me, I'm just wondering, is there a relationship or has there been a time in the past perhaps, someone whom you've related to historically, that you perhaps may have reacted or responded in a same or a similar way to? Can you picture anyone, maybe some person in authority or...

**Karen:** Yeah, I can notice a trend, actually.

**Kain:** You can notice a trend, just a pattern.

**Karen:** Yeah.



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**Kain:** Is this just one person or is it a few people, a few examples?

**Karen:** I've got a few example, or a couple anyway, that come to mind.

**Kain:** A few examples? Brilliant, this might mean then that we can potentially identify a trend. Interesting, okay. So would you be happy to share?

**Karen:** Yeah, sure. I can think of an example in a previous job that I had where the person at the top, the boss, I had on a pedestal, and would people please in a way around him.

**Kain:** People please, does that mean be a little bit false around?

**Karen:** Yeah, and say yes to things that I realistically couldn't commit to without stressing myself out, and I can think of one particular example where the conversation's a bit challenging, he's challenging me on something and my decision making, and rather than speak equally to him as an adult, I kind of shut down, I didn't really say what I wanted to say. I withdrew again.

**Kain:** You withdrew, so this wouldn't have been particularly congruent, it wouldn't have been too authentic of you.

**Karen:** No.

**Kain:** And I'm guessing that if you weren't honest, then there's no way that he would ever have known what it was that was going on within you.

**Karen:** No.

**Kain:** So I'm guessing that unless you're honest with people in this way, then no-one's ever going to get to know you better.

**Karen:** No, exactly, yeah.

**Kain:** So that seems...it seems that in some way that might be similar to that recent experience you had, you closed down with confrontation. So it does seem to be the case that this problem isn't just a one off issue that stands alone in isolation, but it is in fact perhaps some sort of pattern that has come from somewhere in the past?

**Karen:** Yeah, another example I can relate to is with my own mother.

**Kain:** With your own mother, okay.

**Karen:** Yeah. And that's more to do with again trying to keep her happy. I can think of conversations we've had where she's tried to advise me or put her opinion across where it hasn't been asked for, and in the same way, rather than just be honest about that, I would be more timid and cower, rather than just be honest about the fact that that opinion wasn't asked for.

**Kain:** Interesting, so we can clearly identify a trend here, and sometimes as counsellors we want to be relying less on theory and sometimes more upon hunches that we get in our gut. So what I'm going to do here, Karen, if it's



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alright to offer you a hunch, I'm just going to ask you a question here. Now, it might be there's nothing to this, I don't know, it's just something that I'm sensing might be important for you. I'm just wondering at what point in your life you decided that your voice was less important than other people's?

**Karen:** I can remember actually a time where I chose not to speak up, it's one of the earliest memories I have. I chose not to speak up in fear, and it seems to have been the start of the trend, I think.

**Kain:** Interesting. I'm just wondering what it is that you know today, I mean, if we were to allow our future habits and behaviours and responses to other people to actually be governed more by logic, by common sense, by wisdom, discernment, evidence than feelings, what might change? Or what could change? Or what would you allow to change?

**Karen:** I would be alright with confrontation.

**Kain:** You'd be alright with confrontation.

**Karen:** And know that this person, every person is equal to me, and it doesn't matter, I'm imperfect, so it doesn't matter, confrontation is a good thing, we can work through it and get stronger in our relationships, and there's a better, more mature way I can handle that.

**Kain:** I'm just wondering that up until now what evidence you have not fully embraced that has led to this trend of avoiding confrontation?

**Karen:** What evidence I've not fully embraced.

**Kain:** Yeah, if any, just if any.

**Karen:** I reckon it's that I don't need to keep this other person happy, it doesn't matter that I've not ticked all the boxes.

**Kain:** It doesn't matter that you've not ticked all the boxes.

**Karen:** All I can really be is just honest. If I've let someone down, then I'm only human.

**Kain:** You're only human, so the same as them.

**Karen:** Exactly, the same as them, so get over it, in a way.

**Kain:** Get over it, you're laughing right now.

**Karen:** Just because it seems so ridiculous to be so focused in on an imperfection when we make mistakes all the time.

**Kain:** Interesting. So, thanks very much for that.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

